



Implementing Rigour and Responsiveness

BIS / DfE brief on progress for FE Governors and Leaders:

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Apprenticeships

Employer-led Trailblazers are leading the way in implementing new apprenticeships to meet the changing needs of the economy. They are collaborating to design apprenticeship standards and assessment approaches to make them world class. On 23 October we announced a third phase of Trailblazers involving over 700 employers in 37 sectors. This is in addition to the 400 employers who are taking part in the first two phases of Trailblazers, taking the total number of employers involved to over 1000. The new apprenticeships are in a broad range of sectors from nuclear to fashion, law, banking and the armed forces.

The first apprentices have already started on the approved standards since September 2014 in the Automotive and Energy and Utilities sectors. There will be further opportunities for employers to develop new standards. The new 'Guidance for Developers of Apprenticeship Standards and Related Assessment Plans' sets out the next dates to apply at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-of-apprenticeships-in-england-guidance-for-trailblazers>

Standards and assessment plans that have been produced by employers and agreed by Government are published at: www.apprenticeships.org.uk/standards Standards being developed by employer groups across the Trailblazers can be viewed here: www.apprenticeships.org.uk/standardsindevelopment

Funding Reform

Routing funding for apprenticeship training and assessment through employers is an essential element of our ambitions to grow and improve apprenticeships. We are trialling a simple funding approach for new employer-led Apprenticeship standards in 2014/15. This is based on Government contributing £2 for every £1 the employer contributes to the external training and assessment costs of the apprentice, with additional incentive payments for small businesses, and relating to the employment of 16-18 year old apprentices and successful completion.

We will be learning from these trials and we will continue to consider all options, including the responses to the recent technical consultation, to ensure that the reforms are a success.

Traineeships

Traineeships have had an excellent first year with over 10,000 young people taking up opportunities and commitments from a host of major employers to thousands more traineeships over the coming years.

We have continued to learn from provider and employer experiences in delivering the programme and as a result made a series of improvements for 2014/15 which included removal of the '16 hour' training rule for job seekers; more flexibility for

providers and employers to tailor work experience placements; and extension of the funding to 24 year olds.

We want to continue to grow the programme at pace, whilst maintaining a strong focus on quality. As the key outcome for participants is progression it is important that institutions capture the outcomes for individuals leaving traineeships (apprenticeship starts, other jobs, further learning). For 2015/16 we consulted on how we can strengthen the focus on positive outcomes for traineeships whilst at the same time achieving greater consistency in the offers for the 16 to 18 and 19 to 24 age groups. We will publish our response shortly.

We encourage more eligible providers to deliver traineeships and to make use of the resources developed through the Education and Training Foundation's Traineeship Staff Support Programme - details can be found at: <http://www.traineeship-staff-support.co.uk/>. In addition, the Government will continue to promote traineeships through national marketing and communication activity led by the National Apprenticeships Service, helping to support local efforts by providers.

Maths and English

In 2012 we announced that students who have not achieved a good pass in English and/or maths GCSE by age 16 should continue to work towards achieving these qualifications. In 2013/14 the number of 16-19 students taking English and maths appears to have increased substantially, especially in the numbers taking GCSEs. This suggests that the process of expanding maths and English provision is now well underway. This is being backed up by the Education Training Foundation and the National College for Teaching and Leadership's major investment in teacher training and recruitment. Further details are available on their websites.

In July we announced that from September 2015, when the reformed GCSEs in maths and English can first be taught, all students with grade D will be expected to study for a GCSE. Over the summer we issued a call for evidence on the introduction of the new GCSE in post-16 education and we'll be publishing the results shortly. My officials have been discussing with practitioners and their representatives on how to ensure that on the one hand every young person who can achieve a GCSE has the best opportunity to do so whilst, on the other, that high quality alternatives are available to those where this isn't going to be possible. Further details on the implementation of the new GCSE requirements will follow shortly.

16-19 Technical and Vocational Education

Rigorous technical and vocational education is essential to our economy, the future of this country and more and more young people are taking them, indeed in 2012/13 52% of all 16-19 year olds studied at least one. Last November we published a list of technical and vocational qualifications that were really valued by employers and universities and will continue to be reported in 16-19 performance tables. Schools and colleges are now teaching these qualifications, recognising their value in enabling 16-19 year olds to progress to the next step of their careers, be it further

study, an apprenticeship or skilled employment. Students who also achieve a level 3 maths and an extended project qualification will also be reported under the new Technical Baccalaureate performance tables measure. From 2016 larger Technical Baccalaureate programmes will be eligible for a 10% or 20% uplift in funding. Further details are available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/266408/TechBacc_policy_statement_FINAL.pdf.

We'll shortly be announcing the outcome of a third round (£1 million) of Shared Learning Grants made to institutions and provider associations who are offering expertise to schools and colleges in implementing the 16-19 study programme reforms and flexibilities introduced from September 2013.

FE Workforce Strategy

The FE Workforce Strategy sets out our priorities in supporting the sector to strive for excellence in the quality and professionalism of teachers and trainers. With the introduction from September 2015 of funding conditions requiring students who have previously attained a grade D at GCSE in maths and English to be entered for a GCSE, we recognise the importance of encouraging the best teachers to teach in FE. Our £30 million package is supporting the sector in this ambition and has been further refined with development of an in-service maths teacher programme in direct response to requests from the sector. The work of the Education and Training Foundation has been central in representing your views to us and in delivering programmes which resonate with the sector, for example the maths and English enhancement programmes and the premium graduate recruitment scheme, which has a high level of applications. Our announcement in October of the extension of initial teacher training bursaries to 2015/16 and continuing to match the offer made for schools is an important statement of our commitment to the long term change that is required. We will continue to refine our offer of support so that it best meets the need of the sector and welcome the opportunities to continue to discuss this with you.

We encourage you to make the best use of the support available, so we can work together to strengthen the teaching workforce to meet these demands. Further details on the workforce strategy can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-workforce-strategy>

24+ Advanced Learning Loans

As was planned since the introduction of 24+ Advanced Learning Loans, the budget for 2014/15 is much larger than in 2013/14, especially as it was not reduced when Apprenticeships were removed from Loans funding. This provides you with the opportunity to grow the amount of provision you plan to be funded from this source. Some providers have already applied for increased loans facilities over and above what they were allocated at the beginning of the year; have you thought about doing the same? For more details on how to do this, speak to the Skills Funding Agency

through your usual contact. In order to do this you should complete a 24+ advanced learning loan facility and bursary change request form <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/24-advanced-learning-loans-facility-adjustment-request-form> and email it to 24PlusALL-FacilityRequests@sfa.bis.gov.uk

FE Commissioner Summary Assessments

To enable governing bodies and senior executives in all FE providers to learn lessons from the FE Commissioner's experiences, we have published the FE Commissioner's Summary Assessments which detail his findings and conclusions.

A total of 11 summaries have been published up to 27 October 2014 along with a letter to the individual colleges, charging them to produce an action plan to address the necessary improvements. These summaries are available to download at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-commissioner-intervention-summary-assessments>

BIS will be publishing summaries, of all future FE Commissioner assessments, once the college or institution subject to intervention has responded to the recommendations.

Publication of the FE Commissioner's Annual Report

The FE Commissioner will be publishing his first annual report during mid-November. The annual report summarises the recommendations arising from each of the FE commissioner interventions. It covers the period from 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2014 with updates on progress made by each of the colleges assessed to 31 October 2014.

Intervention Evaluation

The Commissioner-led intervention process set out in 'Intervention in Further Education: the Strengthened Intervention Process' (link below) continues to go from strength to strength. Since the FE Commissioner was appointed in August 2013 he has led fourteen interventions, ensuring that rapid and rigorous action is being taken to secure necessary improvement in failing colleges. The City of Liverpool College will soon become the first college to successfully complete the intervention process, and I am delighted to see how much progress the college has made over the past eighteen months.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-commissioner-intervention-process>

It is clear that this approach is having a positive impact and we want to understand the specific benefits being delivered. We are therefore undertaking an evaluation, involving a wide range of interested parties, to look at the outcomes delivered to date, the experiences of those involved in the intervention process and lessons learnt which can inform future arrangement.

FE College Financial Health and Exceptional Financial Support

We will be publishing shortly a policy paper around the new financial support available to colleges with weak financial health going forward. This support will be available in exceptional circumstances and may trigger intervention action. Where exceptional financial support is required by a college for a period which is likely to exceed 12 months, this will trigger intervention action and it will be provided in the form of a Loan, entered into between BIS and the college, with an expectation that it will support college actions which deliver robust, sustainable business models, good financial controls and strong resilience to change.

Outcome Based Success Measures

We have made clear that at both 16-19 and in adult provision more focus will be placed on learner outcomes. In spring this year we published our plans for an accountability regime for 16-19 provision. Our consultation on new outcome focused measures of performance for adult provision closed on 10 October.

These measures use matched administrative data which is already collected across Government. The measures focus on three areas: learner destinations (into employment or further learning); progression within learning; and earnings. We proposed to use these alongside existing measures of achievement to inform learner and employer choice, and ultimately as part of Government's performance management of the post-19 education and skills sector. We also published experimental data alongside the consultation to inform responses (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-further-education-outcome-based-success-measures-experimental-data-2010-to-2011> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-further-education-learners-matched-data-earnings-analysis>).

We had good engagement from the sector and we are grateful for all your input. We intend to publish our response to the consultation shortly.

Vocational Qualifications

"Getting the job done", the Government's reform plan for vocational qualifications published in March, highlighted the large number of qualifications which are offered to adults by a wide range of awarding organisations, showing that the system is overly complex, and that learners and employers are often unsure whether a qualification is of high quality and will lead to employment. Ofqual, the independent regulator of qualifications, is therefore considering changes to the regulatory system for vocational qualifications, which will give a greater emphasis to what qualifications deliver (rather than whether they conform to technical rules) and will ensure that they remain robust throughout their operational lives. We are working with the other administrations in the UK to ensure that National Occupational Standards, which underpin many vocational qualifications, are flexible and fit for purpose. We will also put in place a clear set of principles around what and who the government will fund from the Adult Skills Budget, to ensure that it is used with maximum effect.

Technology: FELTAG – Six Months On

The FELTAG report and the Government's response came out earlier this year and we will soon be releasing a short summary on the range of action being taken by government and its agencies as well as the sector itself to deliver on the commitments made. What is clear is that there is much good progress going on with many parts of the sector looking at what they can do and JISC and the Education and Training Foundation, working together, to put in place significant support for the sector to further support this. But it is also clear that one aspect of the report – the push towards more learning being delivered online – has caused some concern in the sector about what will be required to deliver the 10% ambition. The recent Agency statement has clarified this but it is worth re-enforcing that message here.

The intention of FELTAG, and the Government's response to it, is to encourage greater use of digital technologies and a better 'blend' of online and traditional face to face delivery to engage learners more effectively and ensure greater value for money for everyone from the FE and Skills budget. We stand by this ambition. To take this forward we need to establish the current levels of online provision and hence the Skills Funding Agency is undertaking a "temperature check" via the ILR to find this out. They are also undertaking a set of pilots to understand better how funding incentives might best work. They will be collecting this evidence over the next year and so will not be considering making changes to the funding system about this until at least 2016/17.

National Colleges

The call for engagement for proposals to establish new National Colleges ended in September. National Colleges will provide a long term strategic focus for their sector and deliver the specialist high level skills training needed by employers within the industry, operating alongside schools, colleges and other providers of further and higher education to ensure that strong progression routes exist for learners across all parts of the country. A total of 28 proposals were received, and Ministers are expected to make a decision later this autumn about which ones will go forward for immediate development, and which will need to be developed further over a longer timeframe.

Skills Funding Agency Chief Executive Recruitment

The Minister announced on 29 October 2014 the permanent appointment of Peter Lauener as the Chief Executive of the Skills Funding Agency from Monday 3 November 2014. Peter will retain his post as the Chief Executive of the Education Funding Agency in the Department for Education. News of the appointment can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/peter-lauener-announced-as-the-new-chief-executive-of-skills-funding-agency>

Perkins Review of Engineering Skills

Over the last year, Government has worked with the engineering community to tackle the recommendations from the Perkins Review of Engineering Skills. In particular, task and finish groups have facilitated concerted action between employers and educators to boost engineering skills supply across schools, colleges and universities.

The engineering community has played a key role in what has been achieved this year and to reflect this, we have written a progress report in partnership with them. This was launched by the Secretary of State, the Rt. Hon. Dr Vince Cable on 3 November to mark the beginning of Tomorrow's Engineers Week. This progress report can be downloaded here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/engineering-skills-perkins-review-progress-report

However, this report only marks the end of the beginning: we have much more to do to ensure that these actions make a meaningful impact on the engineering skills supply challenge. As well as progress, the report also sets out the engineering community's commitment to take forward the long-term work together with key partners. More information, including a detailed section on how they plan to improve cutting edge skills in FE can be found on their website: www.educationforengineering.org.uk/perkinsreport

Social Mobility Business Compact

FE institutions are at the very heart of promoting social mobility and helping people to realise their full potential through learning, but it is also important that FE institutions show they are committed to social mobility as an employer. We would therefore urge you to demonstrate your commitment by becoming a Social Mobility Business Compact signatory. The Compact asks employers to work with schools and communities to raise the aspirations of young people, provide fair and open work experience and paid internship opportunities and ensure that their recruitment practices eliminate barriers to social mobility.

By adopting the Compact principles you will benefit by widening your recruitment pool and promoting the reputation of the FE sector. You will also be part of a network of like-minded organisations with whom you can share effective practice, and we hope that FE institution and Universities will become a grown part of this network.

The application form, factsheet and list of signatories can be found on the gov.uk website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-compact-signatories-and-factsheet>

Completed applications should be sent to socialmobilitybusinesscompact@bis.gsi.gov.uk. You can also use this mailbox if you have any questions or would like to talk to someone about your application.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The new system for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities was launched on 1 September 2014. The reforms will require significant changes to policy, procedure and practice in further education colleges in England. To help assist college leaders to implement these changes successfully the Department for Education through the AoC has made a range of materials available. These include an information pack, and a set of slides designed to help engage the college community including staff and governors in understanding exactly what is changing and what needs to be done differently. Edward Timpson, the Minister responsible for special educational needs and disability policy, has also addressed the top 12 questions about the reforms that colleges put to him. Both the materials and the Minister's Q and A can be found [here](#).

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
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